

REMARKS

Claims 33-42, 48, 49, and 54-87 are pending in this application. Claims 33, 34, 48, and 54 have been amended. New Claims 56-87 have been added. Claims 1-32, 43-47, and 50-53 have been cancelled. Support for the amendments and new claims is found in the specification and claims as filed.

Amendments to the Specification

The specification has been amended to incorporate matter from U.S. 5,453,278 to Brauker et al., which was incorporated by reference in the present application at page 19, lines 11-12. The subject matter added to the paragraph beginning at page 18, line 11 of the present application is found at col. 15, lines 46-49 of U.S. 5,453,278. The subject matter added to the paragraph beginning at page 18, line 24 of the present application is found at col. 18, lines 27-31 of U.S. 5,453,278. Applicants respectfully request that the amendment to the specification be entered.

Claim Rejection - 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 21, 22, 24, 28-33, and 43-48 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. 5,964,993 to Blubaugh Jr. et al. in view of U.S. 5,564,439 to Picha. Although Applicants do not agree with the propriety of the rejection, Claims 21, 22, 24, 28-32, and 43-47 have been cancelled without prejudice, solely to facilitate issuance of the claims indicated to be allowable. Claims 33 and 48 have been amended to depend from Claim 34 which had been indicated to be allowable if redrafted into independent form. The rejection is therefore moot.

Claims 50-54 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. 5,964,993 to Blubaugh Jr. et al. in view of U.S. 5,564,439 to Picha and U.S. 6,466,810 to Ward. Although Applicants do not agree with the propriety of the rejection, Claims 50-53 have been cancelled without prejudice, solely to facilitate issuance of the claims indicated to be allowable. Claim 54 has been amended to depend from Claim 34 which had been indicated to be allowable if redrafted into independent form. The rejection is therefore moot.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication of allowability with respect to the allowability of claims 38-42, 49, and 55. Claims 34-37 have been indicated to be

allowable if redrafted into independent form. Claim 34 has been redrafted into independent form, and claims 35-37 depend from redrafted Claim 34 or an intervening claim.

Conclusion

Should the Examiner have any remaining concerns that might prevent the prompt allowance of the application, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

KNOBBE, MARTENS, OLSON & BEAR, LLP

Dated: Jan 12, 2004

By:



Rose M. Thiessen
Registration No. 40,202
Attorney of Record
Customer No. 20,995
(619) 235-8550

S:\DOCS\RMT\RMT-2805.DOC
010904